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SUBJECT: Female Tent City Heroes Reaffirmed Commitment to
Work for Change

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11. (U) On July 28, leader of the Women's Independent Democratic Movement (WIDM) Ludmila Petina presented the release of the organization's latest information bulletin, "We Are Women," in the Embassy's Public Affairs Section building (reftel). The bulletin included interviews and editorials from women activists who participated in the rallies and demonstrations following the 2006 presidential elections. [Note: The delay in publication resulted from WIDM's difficulty in finding a printer.]

12. (SBU) During the event, several of the "women heroes" featured in the bulletin presented first-hand accounts of their experiences. Many commented that although they had all but given up on prospects for change in Belarus, the response from their fellow citizens, and in particular from Belarusian women, to defend their rights following the elections renewed their commitment to work for democratic change in Belarus. Head of the Belarusian Association of Students Alyena Talapila poignantly remarked in her interview for the bulletin, "We had a year of freedom during these four days [in the tent city protest on October Square]. We felt we were numerous. We were strong. And such people can move mountains. We didn't care much what the president or the authorities thought. It was a victory for us. We had overcome our fears of being beaten or arrested and our fears to bring about change. [Our success on October Square] was a psychological victory for me."

MOORE